



Laurie, Debussy and Me

Dr. Byron Harker

On one of the annual Grade 10 trips to the Stratford Festival, we saw *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, an amusing and disturbing play that deals among other themes - with coincidence. One scene in particular shows the title characters flipping coins over and over again, trying to find a predictable, comprehensible pattern in the way heads or tails come up. Through their accompanying patter, hilariously reminiscent of *Waiting for Godot*, the playwright, Tom Stoppard, asks delicately but obsessively whether the universe exhibits a plan, whether, indeed, there be a Planner. In the face of remarkable coincidence, one does feel a temptation, "modern" and secular as one feels himself to be, to affirm that, yes, there *is* a plan and maybe even a Planner. Sitting through Stoppard's play in the dark of the Avon Theatre, I began to recall a chain of coincidences that seem to inform my life.

The first of these bits of apparently significant coincidences concerns the structure of my family. We are six children, divided into two "families." In the first family are a boy, a girl, and another boy, born two years apart. Seven years to the day - December 10 - the second family began to appear: a boy, a girl, and another boy (I am he), one year apart. In personality and even vocation, the eldest boys in each family are alike, the two girls are alike, and the youngest boys are alike. Our parents and aunts and uncles and grandparents remarked about our similarity so often during our

growing up that, to an extent, the coincidence became less metaphysically significant, perhaps, than purposively formative. Laurie, the brother to whom I correspond, became something of a Jungian archetype to me. Because he was training during most of my adolescence and beyond to become a research haematologist (a sub-specialty of internal medicine - eight years beyond basic medical school), I, too, wanted to become a doctor. My natural propensities were not scientific, however, and after following many detours and majors, I eventually became a doctor of another kind. I

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to help me effect my own integration.*

don't believe I would have done so had Laurie not preceded me in attaining the title.

Laurie was a tenor, too, so naturally I had to become a tenor, even though I had to train my lyric baritone upwards for years to reach high B. I still have no high C, even in falsetto. Laurie was a soloist with the University of Alberta Mixed Chorus; I followed him there. He brought home for Christmas the first pieces of classical music I'd ever heard: Handel's *Messiah* and Ravel's *Piano Trio in A Minor*. Since then I've performed the solos and the chorus work of Handel's oratorio at least a dozen times, and my party piece, which my friends dutifully beg me to trot out on suitable occasions, is *Every Valley*. Ravel haunts me continually, and someday I'm going to be able to play his *Sonatine* as quickly and as softly as it's supposed to be played. Two years ago I performed these very pieces at Laurie's

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Poems Live in Grade One

From the moment they walk into their classroom, Grade One students begin working with poetry. Poems surround the children with the variety and euphony of the English language. Some poems are old friends: jingles, rhymes, and songs. Others are curious new acquaintances - new ventures into a world of words and thoughts.

After their initial success memorizing poems, the students begin to identify familiar letters, sounds, whole words, and even phrases. For them, the delights of reading have begun, and poetry is an integral part of this process.

*Spring is showery, flowery, bowery
Summer: hoppy, choppy, poppy.*

Anonymous

Poems expand a child's perception of the rhythm and rhyme in language. Students recite the playful rhythms with endless pleasure. And rhyme - an adult's forgotten treasure - children revel. In rhyming poems, children sift the gold and silver of their language: its enunciations, alliterations, exaggerations, and connotations.

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Turnover Sale

Please dig through your closets once again, and drop off your clean and out-grown uniforms at the School office by Tuesday, June 16 (between 8:30 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. on school days). We accept sweaters, pants (on hangers please), shirts (folded), blazers, duffles and trenches. Blazers, duffles and trenches should all be individually marked with your name, address, postal code, phone number and the size of the clothing. New shirts are available.

For further information, please call

Susan Mann - 484-3390

Sandra Guinness - 931-6796

Helen Rutledge - 482-2153

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home in Atlanta, where I was visiting during Christmas. Though he listened appreciatively, in my mind, playing like an old black - and - white movie, *déjà vu*, Laurie was beating time with an ornament, just as he'd used to do when I first began as a child to practise the piano.

Not all such returns are musical, by any means. One of the remnants of my bout last year with lymphoma is a low platelet count. To determine for sure whether this deficiency resulted from anything more than my chemotherapy, I underwent a Platelet Survival Test - which, it turns out, Laurie first invented. Another medical - musical connection jolted me some ten years ago or so. As Doctor MacFarlane, whose two sons Brian and Thomas (who later played Macduff in a Selwyn House production of *Macbeth*) were singing in a three - part treble choir I ran in days of yore, was driving us up Berri one morning for some engagement, he said suddenly, "Harker . . . I know that name. Do you have an older brother called Lawrence?" It turns out that when Dr. MacFarlane was interning at the Montreal General (yes, I've followed Laurie here, too!), his resident in internal medicine was Laurie.

These coincidences involving Laurie are only a slight indication of the pile - ups in my own family. Just to give you a look elsewhere below the surface, I'll say that I'm doubly related to myself. My maternal grandmother lost her husband; my paternal grandfather lost his wife. After they were both beyond eighty - five, my mother's mother married my father's father - an action that made my mother and father, brother and sister - incest of a complicated sort, n'est - ce pas?

My fascination with "meaningful" (wretched, canting word, isn't it?) coincidence was re - fired recently when after having read with my Grade 11's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, I told Kathi Biggs that I had assigned a short essay on coincidence. She told me that she'd just done the same thing! The resolution of Wilde's plot depends on a very heavy - handed but amusing double coincidence: the very characters who want both to be called Ernest (because their fiancées demand it) turn out legitimately so be called, once the mysteries of their origins reveal themselves. Plots, being man - made, all depend somewhere on coincidence. Some authors are better than others at concealing or making acceptable the coincidences that hold

their plots together. Many a Grade 10 student remarks that in *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams practically shouts out his structural coincidences. The one boy whom Laura in that play liked turns out to be the only gentleman caller she ever receives, and their one concurrence turns out to precipitate the tragic conclusion of the play. Obvious or not, coincidences permeate literature and life alike. More than one of my Grade 11s wrote in a footnote to his composition on coincidence, "Sir, I know this seems an incredible coincidence, but it really happened!"

Jung is the only theorist who gives us moderns an explanation for coincidence. In his view, synchronicity (*pace*, Sting) is the result of the operation of the Archetypes of the universal unconscious. I long ago acceded to his theory, and moreover I am still

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looking for a good, cheap Jungian analyst to help me effect my own integration. (I know that somewhere in Montreal is a Jungian Society - not listed in the telephone book.) I suppose my affection for Robertson Davies is at least partly explicable as a coincidence of Jungian belief. I do so like the way the stone Boy Staunton throws at Mary Dempster underlies the plot of *Fifth Business*. I'm not alone here, either. The American novelist John Irving was so affected by Davies' device that he borrowed it, or invented a similar one, for his *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, a book you must read, if you haven't done so already. The narrator of Irving's book, like Dunstable Rasmsay, is a teacher in a private school - Bishop Straughan for girls, not Upper Canada College for boys. I detect another coincidence in my own status here at Selwyn House. Perhaps my own novel is in gestation this very moment? Coincidence seems to imply that we must come down, in the classic debate, on the side of determinism, rather than freedom. Maybe even the ability to be optimistic enough to believe in freedom, the gift of faith, is inherent in our psycho - physical make - ups. What choice do I have? Well, a lot, really. But in the background Debussy's "Deux Arabesques" is being performed by - Dale Bartlett, now a professor at Concordia, but in my childhood, when I first heard these two beautiful piano pieces, Dale Bartlett was playing them on the CBC station in Lethbridge. He was the then *Wunderkind* of the area. He lived at Wilson Siding, ten miles from my home, Raymond. What is one to think?

Women and Children First

On April 15, Gazette reporter Alan Hustak addressed students in Grades 2 to 7 about the sinking of the Titanic. Mr. Hustak is an authority on the 32 known Canadians travelling on the Titanic, which 80 years ago struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic and sank in just over 2 hours.

Mr. Hustak told the familiar story of disbelief. How could the ship sink? Why were there so few lifeboats? Who allowed all of the mistakes and omissions that led to 1 600 people drowning?

In his opinion, what keeps this story alive and compelling today is the opportunity it provides to reflect on whether we, in a similar circumstance, would give up our own life to save the life of a friend or family member. Hundreds of Titanic passengers were faced with just that choice as they rushed to the lifeboats, or selflessly gave up their place - in some cases to a stranger.

Mr. Hustak recommended Walter Lord's *A Night to Remember*, an accurate and readable account of the tragedy. He also recommended a new IMAX film to be released this autumn on the discovery of the Titanic's wreck.

Poems Live in Grade One - (continued from page 1)

Eons ago, when the earth was still yeasty.

Gretchen Kreps

Children enrich their vocabulary through poetry by seeing strange and exciting words isolated on a single line of a poem, which is often easier to focus on than a line of prose. They recognize how language can be used in unusual, amusing, and effective ways.

I have a secret place to go.

Not anyone may know.

And sometimes when the wind is rough

I cannot get there fast enough.

Gwendolyn Brooks

Poetry is the perfect vehicle for the discussion and comprehension of meaning in language, even at a young age. Feelings and ideas in a poem if familiar can be reassuring and thereby, empowering, and if new can be a source of curiosity and thereby, spark questions and lead to answers.

Poetry feeds every area of the curriculum. Poems learned in Grade One introduce language units on safaris, science projects on space, and number recognition in math.

My desk's at the back of the class

And nobody, nobody knows

I'm a Matog from Mars.

R. C. Scriven

Children have a magnificent appreciation for the absurd. Although their world is not topsy-turvy (it is very matter-of-fact), they love to see reality overturned. Poems feed this love of nonsense. Humour and laughter are the gifts of poetry as much as they are the gift of jokes and cartoons.

My name is Sluggery-wuggery

My name is Worms-for-tea.

Pauline Clark

Poetry also brings drama into the classroom. Children have a gift for mimicry, a talent effectively exercised when capturing the tone of a poem, the voice of a character, or the irony of a theme. Reciting a poem before his classmates is often the child's first experience with public speaking. A child gains confidence as he learns how to deliver poems to an audience.

As long as I live

I shall always be

My Self - and no other

Just me.

Walter de la Mare

After listening to, reading, and integrating myriads of poems, children recognize their affinity for certain favorites. Those chosen remain with them. Poems live in Grade One at Selwyn House as teachers and friends. They are on the wall, over the window, behind the door, and in the heart.

Keep a poem in your pocket

And a picture in your head

and you'll never feel lonely

at night when you're in bed.

B. Schednk de Regniers



Roman Pylat
Grade One Teacher

Newsmakers

A Bestseller in the Making

As a result of their 1990 presentation at the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers' Conference in Vancouver, Hélène Bourduas and Martin Rondeau were asked by Édition du Renouveau Pédagogique (an educational publishing house) to create four teaching modules that could be used by other immersion programmes world-wide. Due for publication next September, the four modules integrate French, math, social studies, and science. Each will be organized around a specific theme. The four themes are cinema, collectibles, video games, and the environment.

From Caves to Flight

For the second year in a row Selwyn House students excelled at the Montreal Regional Science Fair. Noah Bloom '96 and Joe Flanders '96 (Aerodynamics of Flight); André Nguyen '96 and Adrian Schauer '96 (Wind Energy); Mark Spielman '96 and Julian O'Flynn '96 (House Alarms); and Patrick Kerkhoven '96 (Aerodynamics of the Common Vehicle) received honorable mentions. Eric Goldwarg '95 (The World of Caves) and Nicky Baass '96 (Solar Power and Solar Collectors) each won a bronze medal.

Nincheri's Holistic Approach

Roger Nincheri has been named to a committee to revise the *Geography of Quebec and Canada Programme*. The revisions will focus on changing the attitude towards teaching geography. Mr. Nincheri explained, "In the past, many teachers had their students memorize the material. This is neither a fun nor an effective approach. Our objective with these revisions is to change attitudes: shift the onus to practical work from memorization. This practical, holistic approach is one we have been using at Selwyn House for some time now. The idea is to allow the students the total experience of geography - the landscape of affecting man."

Au primaire, ça bouge en français!

Au mois de janvier, nos petits de première année sont allés à la Maison Théâtre assister au spectacle de marionnettes intitulé "La petite marchande d'allumette."

"Les troisièmes" ont passé trois jours (du 5 au 7 février) à la classe - neige à l'Auberge du p'tit Bonheur, dans les Laurentides! Ils ont fait de la raquette, du ski de randonnée, de la glissade, du ballon - balai et du patinage.

Par petits groupes guidés, ils sont allés faire de l'observation et de l'orientation en forêt. Ils ont appris plusieurs notions de survie en construisant des abris et en faisant un petit feu tout en mangeant de la "banik" (pain indien), expérience mémorable pour certains!

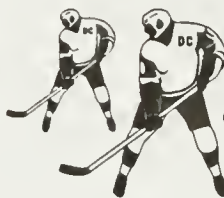
Le soir, nos petits amis sont allés faire une promenade au flambeau et ont bu du chocolat chaud autour d'un joyeux feu de camp tout en écoutant émerveillés, les légendes racontées par leurs moniteurs! Ils ont aussi fait un tour de carriole dans la forêt en chantant bien fort...pour se réchauffer!

Ce fut une expérience qui restera longtemps gravée dans leur mémoire! Si vous voyez un élève de troisième année, demandez - lui de vous chanter la chanson "Flee fly flo," vous verrez naître un immense sourire sur son visage!

À venir:

Classe - verte pour la cinquième année!
(semaine du 27 au 29 mai).

Hockey Wins Provincials



Once again the Selwyn House Hockey Team displayed the kind of play that made them the team to beat all season. After a disappointing loss in the finals of the City Championships, the team vowed to put that game behind them and concentrate on the Provincial Championships. And concentrate they did.

In a solidly played opening match, Selwyn House defeated Massy Vanier (6 - 1) and went on to beat John Rennie (5 - 4) in the semi - finals. This game proved a true challenge as John Rennie tied the score with only two minutes left. The game then went into overtime, but Selwyn House's tenacious defense and aggressive offense won the day.

In the championship game Selwyn met Alexander Galt. During the first two periods the Gryphons played flawless hockey, but Galt was able to tie the game (3 - 3) with only four minutes left to play. With one minute left, Willie Goldman '92 picked up a pass from Robbie Boeckh '93, drove right to the net, and flicked a pass to Chris Browne '92 who smashed it out of the air and into the Galt net.

"Although the whole team deserves high praise, goalie Fabio Moscatelli '92 deserves specific mention," Coach Mitchell explained, "Fabio played the best hockey he has ever played during his two - year tenure at the varsity level." The game ended 4-3 for Selwyn House - The 1992 Quebec High School Champions.

How Do Cows Make Milk?



If your son returns from school one day carrying freshly churned butter and explaining how cows make milk, he is probably in Grade Two. These days the Grade Twos are into farms. Over the next month they will be reading *Farmer Boy* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, designing and making a quilt, preparing cornbread and butter, as well as visiting MacDonald College Farm to witness first hand what they are learning about in class.

Upcoming Events

May 11 - 14 La Sixième à Québec
May 15 Elementary School Track Meet
May 18 No Classes (Victoria Day)
May 20 Music Evening
7:00 P.M. Everyone Welcome
May 21 Athletic Banquet
May 22 Grad Dance
May 28 Old Boys' Induction Dinner

June 3 Exams begin
June 12 Last day of classes for Grades 1 to 6
June 16 Elementary Prizegiving
June 18 Senior Prizegiving

Looking Ahead!

Don't throw it out! Bring it in or call Marc to pick up any items for next October's Garage Sale (931-9481).